



Whilst visiting the Bath area some time ago I visited the Bath Industrial Heritage Centre, a superb collection of material from the firm of Samuel Bowler & Co. Ltd., who never threw anything away.

In the reconstructed office on the first floor I noticed a perfin machine looking rather sorry for itself as it was covered with rust on the perforating plate thus preventing the machine from being used. When I returned home I wrote to the curator and offered to repair it to the best of my ability. This offer was accepted and the machine sent to me. I then realised the task to be done. Over a period of time I was able to release the various screws and dismantle the machine with the exception of the head, which held the steel pins. Despite much trying the two parts, which were held together with four screws remained rusted together so I was unable to remove each individual pin. In addition the coiled spring designed to retract the die after each operation was missing. After much experimenting I eventually found the correct length and compression needed. Test perfins were made on plain paper and thin card but, despite all efforts, it was not possible to make the die retract. I believe that this was due solely to my inability to dismantle the head and clean the pins. My efforts were not the first as the head showed many marks where it had been levered apart from the guide, probably in its final period of use. However, the machine did now work for those people who just must touch objects!

I have stressed to the curator, the importance of not allowing the machine to be used to perforate stamps whilst it is in the possession of the Museum.

Regretfully the perfin cannot yet be catalogued as no example has been found on a stamp so would all members please check their collections to see if they have an example? As a reward (?) I will supply the first five members who can provide positive details of this perfin on a stamp of the correct period of usage with a perfin on thin white card taken from the machine.

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